



Dear Friends,

In recent months, most of the publicity about recovered memories and multiple personality disorder has been in connection with the new Showtime television series: *The United States of Tara*. For example, CBS, which owns Showtime, devoted a segment of CBS Sunday Morning to “Unraveling the Secret of ‘Alters.’”<sup>[1]</sup> The program included an interview with Diablo Cody, the *Tara* program’s writer, in which we learned:

“Have viewers recognized themselves in Tara, [have they] said, ‘Maybe I have this disorder’? Have you gotten that reaction?” asked Smith.

“Yeah, it surprises me,” Cody said. “People actually have said that.”

Why was Diablo Cody surprised? Surely she knows that people make sense of their own lives by what they read or see around them. Surely she and CBS understand the influence they yield. Surely she and CBS know that the diagnosis of multiple personality skyrocketed after the television movie, *Sybil*.

Cody said that she wanted *The United States of Tara* to increase discussion about multiple personality. What kind of discussion might that be when the program has presented such a biased perspective? That bias is seen most clearly in the infomercial that is featured on the program’s website. Richard Kluft, M.D., a strong proponent of multiple personality, now known as dissociative identity disorder, is the only doctor to discuss the diagnosis on the infomercial. He tells viewers:

“The most common question people ask me is: Is it real? And the answer is: ‘It sure is.’”

Dr. Kluft said the following about *Sybil*:

“*Sybil* is a wonderful landmark case. She is someone who made a very successful recovery and had a wonderful career but did not go public. Unlike Eve, she opted for a very quiet and reserved and private life.”

Dr. Kluft made no mention of the skepticism about *Sybil*’s diagnosis that resulted from the discovery of audio tapes of her highly suggestive interviews with Dr. Wilbur. He makes no mention that Herbert Spiegel, M.D., who also treated *Sybil*, did not diagnose her as having multiple personality.<sup>[2]</sup> The infomercial is blatantly biased. On page 4 of this issue, Numan Gharaibeh, M.D., analyzes the Kluft infomercial and discusses the ethical responsibility of all those involved.

An FMSF newsletter reader sent us the following thought provoking comment about *The United States of Tara*:

“It’s ironic that Steven Spielberg is the executive producer of *United States of Tara*. He won an academy award for directing *Schindler’s List*, a Holocaust film, and founded the Shoah Foundation to preserve the testimonies of Holocaust survivors. One would think that Spielberg would be keenly aware of the response to trauma among Holocaust survivors and especially of the lack of Holocaust survivors who claim MPD as their response to the trauma they experienced.”

Fascinating research about memory, suggestibility, and false memories continues to appear in scholarly journals and the news. A reader sent us a news article about work being done to erase painful memories. (See p. 8). With the article she commented:

“I thought you might be interested in the article “Should painful memories be erased?” If repression of memories is true why would we need something to ‘erase’ painful memories? We seem to want things both ways.”

In a recent article, researchers Richard McNally and Elke Geraerts write that they have new data that sheds light

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The next newsletter will be sent in July 2009.

on the recovered memory arguments. (See p. 3)

For the past decade McNally and colleagues have been studying the cognitive processes of people who have always remembered their abuse, people who believe they have repressed memories of abuse but no actual memories, and people who believe they have recovered repressed memories of childhood abuse. This research enables them to explain the circumstances by which “a genuine recovered child sexual abuse memory does not require repression, trauma, or even complete forgetting.” There are people who were abused but who did not perceive the abuse as traumatic at the time. They did not think about the abuse for many years, and then they later recalled it. Everyday memory processes can explain the subjective experience of recovering a memory.

The researchers note that this explanation of historically accurate recovered memories is not a middle of the road position but rather one based in scientific research. The legal consequences of this understanding are far-reaching, including a reexamination of statutes that rely on the unscientific notion of “repression.”

People continue to contact the Foundation about new law suits based on claims of repressed and recovered memories. A few older cases remain in the news. For example the Hosanna Church case in Ponchoutola, Louisiana lumbers along with additional trials planned following two convictions. (See p.11) It seems a surreal 1990 drama set in 2009.

The Shanley case in Boston has reached the Massachusetts Commonwealth’s highest court. (See p. 10) The charismatic 1960s “street” priest Paul Shanley was con-

victed in 2005 based on the recovered memory of Paul Busa.. The critical point of the appeal is whether the recovered memory evidence should have been admitted in court.

The Massachusetts law on the admission of repressed memory evidence was set in 2001 in Commonwealth v. Frangipane. Although the Supreme Judicial Court in that case initially acknowledged that there was a significant controversy in the scientific literature, it then modified its issued opinion to say that scientific controversy was confined to the mechanisms of memory and indeed there was no controversy in the scientific literature about the validity of repressed and recovered memory. This modification came about after an amicus brief was filed, post-decision, by the Leadership Council <sup>[1]</sup> that appeared to review the scientific literature but, in our view, was riddled with serious errors and omissions. It appears that appellant Frangipane was not permitted to respond to the brief filed by the Leadership Council. Nor were any other interested parties solicited for input. The Supreme Judicial Court’s decision in the Shanley case will be an important comment on the legal status of “repressed memories” in the legal system at this point in time.

With all that has been learned about memory, suggestibility, and false memories in the past decade, it should be only a matter of time until the legal system reflects what is known. Of, course “a matter of time” can be extensive.

**Pamela**

1. Smith, T. (2009, March 8). Unraveling the secret of “alters”. Doctors are of two minds about multiple personality disorder. CBS Sunday Morning. Retrieved on March 9, 2009 from <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/03/08/sunday/main4852177.shtml>
2. See FMSF Newsletter May/June 2006, Volume 15 No. 3
3. Murphy, W.J. (2001, March 30). Brief of the Leadership Council, Submitted to Commonwealth of Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in Commonwealth v. Frangipane, SJC-08359.

### **How Many Alters? How Many MPD Patients?**

In 1988 Dr. Richard Kluft described patients who had many alters,<sup>[1]</sup> one with 4,500 alters and another with more than 4,000. Kluft currently appears to believe that there are millions of people who have “undiagnosed multiple personality disorder.”<sup>[2]</sup>

“So do you think that there are, what, thousands of people walking around out there with MPD who don’t even know it?” Smith asked.

“Oh, easily,” Dr. Kluft said.

“Tens of thousands?”

“Easily.”

“Hundreds of thousands?”

“Easily.”

“Millions?”

“We might be at that level,” said Dr. Kluft.

1. Kluft, R. (1988). The phenomenology and treatment of extremely complex multiple personality disorder. *Dissociation*, 1 (4), 47-58
2. Smith, T. (2009, March 8). Unraveling the secret of “alters”. Doctors are of two minds about multiple personality disorder. CBS Sunday Morning. Retrieved on March 9, 2009 from <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/03/08/sunday/main4852177.shtml>.

### ***Try to Remember: Psychiatry’s Clash Over Meaning, Memory, and Mind***

Paul McHugh, M.D., Washington, DC: Dana Press  
(Excerpts from Wall Street Journal Book Review)

“One of the most extraordinary outbreaks of popular delusion in recent years was that which attached to the possibility of ‘recovered memory’ of sexual and satanic childhood abuse, and to an illness it supposedly caused, Multiple Personality Disorder. No medieval peasant praying to a household god for the recovery of his pig could have been more credulous than scores of psychiatrists, hosts of therapists and thousands of willing victims. The whole episode would have been funny had it not been so tragic.”

Theodore Dalrymple. (2008, November 19). Destructive delusions. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved on November 20, 2008 from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122714489697843157html>.

## Understanding the Subjective Experience of Recovered Memories

McNally, R.J. & Geraerts, E. (2009). A new solution to the recovered memory debate. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 4 (2), 126-134.

Over the past decade, Harvard professor Richard McNally and his colleagues Susan Clancy and Elke Geraerts have greatly increased our understanding of recovered memories and false memories. McNally was the first to study the cognitive processes of people who claimed to have repressed memories and recovered memories of child sexual abuse. For example, McNally and colleagues found that people who claimed to have recovered repressed memories did not show a superior ability to forget material related to abuse as would be predicted by the dissociative amnesia hypothesis. They also found that people reporting recovered child sexual abuse memories exhibit a heightened propensity for forming false memories. The researchers failed to find the cognitive characteristics that the theory of dissociative amnesia predicted.

The current paper brings even greater clarity to the debate. Ordinary memory processes can explain the subjective experience of recovering memories in some situations. The authors note that the memory debate has been characterized by two perspectives: 1) "Some people repress their memories of abuse because these experiences have been so emotionally traumatic, and they become capable of recalling the child sexual abuse only when it is psychologically safe to do so many years later." The other perspective: "Many reports of recovered memories of sexual abuse are false memories, often inadvertently fostered by therapists." In this article, the authors provide a third interpretation that applies to a subset of people who report recovering memories of child sexual abuse.

This third interpretation is not a middle of the road position. Rather it

involves cases in which people were actually abused but who did not experience the abuse as traumatic at the time that it happened. These people did not think about the abuse for a long time. In some cases, they remembered the abuse but then later forget that they had previously remembered it. The authors remind us that: "Recalling CSA after many years is not the same thing as having recalled a previously repressed memory of trauma." Not

"Factors that increase likelihood that a recovered memory of CSA is genuine

1. The victim experienced the abuse as confusing, disgusting, or scary, but not as a terrifying trauma.

2. The abuse occurred only once, or at most a few times.

3. The victim failed to understand the experience as sexual or as abusive.

4. The victim successfully avoided thinking about experience.

5. There were no reminders so the victim forgot about it.

6. The victim forgot prior recollections of abuse producing the illusion that he or she had forgotten it all along.

7. When person recalls during adulthood, recollections sudden and accompanied by shock that she had forgotten it.

8. When the recollection occurs spontaneously in response to reminders outside of suggestive psychotherapy.

9. The memories that are spontaneous outside of therapy are more likely to be corroborated.

10. Lab research indicates those who recover memories gradually in therapy exhibit heightened propensity to exhibit false memories on Deese-Roediger-McDermott wordlist task. Those who spontaneously recover their memories outside of therapy show a heightened "forgot it all along" effect in laboratory studies when compared to those who recover memories in psychotherapy."

McNally & Geraerts (2009).

having thought about something for a long time is not the same as having been unable to remember it.

The researchers have found that there are two qualitatively different groups who believe that they have recovered repressed memories: 1) people who come to suspect that their emotional problems and life difficulties are the result of blocked memories of sexual abuse. These people tend to recall memories gradually – often with suggestive techniques; 2) people who are unexpectedly reminded of events that they believe they had not thought about for many years. These people tend to recall the memories suddenly.

McNally and colleagues have found that the corroboration rate for people who either failed to think about their abuse or forgot their previous recollection and later recalled it spontaneously after encountering reminders outside of psychotherapy is the same rate as that of people who never forgot their abuse.

The authors argue that the "repression interpretation does not withstand empirical scrutiny," and note that proponents of dissociative amnesia have made significant errors in interpreting the studies on which they rely. For example, they note that in some studies, the memory problems that are mentioned actually refer to everyday forgetfulness—not an inability to remember the trauma. Other errors proponents frequently make include confusing a failure to encode an experience with the inability to recall it and mistaking organic amnesia for the psychic repression of trauma.

The repression interpretation lacks convincing scientific support. There is plentiful solid evidence that shows that some people do recover memories of child sexual abuse that never occurred. This does not mean all recovered memories are false. The current research shows that ordinary memory processes can explain the subjective experience of recovering memories in some situa-



tions.

Many states have extended their statutes of limitations in situations in which there are claims of recovered repressed memories. The authors state that because of their research, the statute of limitations should not be tolled just because someone makes a claim that he or she has been unable to recall abuse for many years, even when the abuse is corroborated. Ordinary memory processes, not repression, explain the subjective experience of recovering a memory. "A genuine recovered child sexual abuse memory does not require repression, trauma, or even complete forgetting."



### Dissociation

#### Prophets and Profiteers:

#### A Hidden Special-Interest Group

Numan Gharaibeh, M.D.

Cable television may be immune from responsibility for its dramatizations, and it may shrug off criticism that a particular program is irresponsible, harmful, misleading, incorrect, and even dangerous by claiming the defense of free speech or "in entertainment, anything goes."

It seems likely that Showtime will hide behind the "it's just a dramatization" and "we did not claim it was educational" defense for its new series about multiple personality: the *United States of Tara*. Are those legitimate excuses given the fact that Showtime included explanatory material about MPD by a psychiatrist in an infomercial? And what about the psychiatrists who contribute to the program's "infomercial?" What is their ethical responsibility? Can (or will) Richard Kluft, M.D. or Colin Ross, M.D. be held responsible for misleading the public and for making irresponsible statements? Following are some statements from the infomercial and my comments about them.

In the infomercial for the *United States of Tara* a narrator claims that:

"[W]hat's ailing Tara [DID/MPD] isn't new.....cases like hers have captured the public's imagination for decades, from the *Three Faces of Eve* in the 50's to *Sybil* in the 70s."

Ironically, it is the entertainment industry that decides what is offered to the public based on decisions about what is likely to capture the public's imagination. The public will be captivated by the stories and the characters presented to them—whether Batman, Spiderman, Iron Man, or Eve, Sybil or Tara.<sup>[1]</sup> It is the dramatization of DID/MPD that the audience finds of interest.

The narration continues:

"Evidence of personality transformation can be traced back to early Paleolithic cave paintings."

The subtleness of gently inserting the word "personality" before transformation is deceptive and insulting to the viewer's intelligence. Primitive societies were saturated with superstition, magic, myth, and curses. Physical transformation is evident in the superstitions of werewolves, vampires, satyres, nymphs, and people cursed into frogs, pigs, or monkeys. Using Paleolithic cave paintings to support a claim or prove a point is an indication of the bankruptcy of logical arguments for MPD.

Richard Kluft says on the infomercial:

"The most common question people ask me is: Is it real? And the answer is 'It sure is.'"

"Is it real?" is the kind of question that is appealing because of simplicity and its yes/no logic. A busy layperson has little time to see through the smoke screen. "Is it real?" may not be answered until there is an agreement on the meaning of "real." Otherwise, the only answer to this question would be: "It depends on whom you ask, of course." What is real (and what "real" is) to individual X may not be real for individual Y. For example, some phenomena such as hallucinations and

delusions are real to the person experiencing them, but unreal for third parties.

Kluft's answer "It sure is" is overreaching. It is not supported by enough evidence. DID/MPD prophets may be "sure," but many others are not so arrogantly confident. Indeed, a 1999 study of board-certified psychiatrists found "little consensus regarding the diagnostic status or scientific validity of dissociative amnesia or dissociative identity disorder."<sup>[2]</sup>

In the infomercial, Kluft defines dissociation as:

"[F]ailure to integrate normal aspects of sense of self, your memory, your perception, your level of consciousness in a normal way."

What does normal mean? Dissociation enthusiasts would call my daydreaming, or my missing a highway exit because I was engrossed in NPR news a sign of a dissociative diagnosis; my diagnosis: *Homo sapiens*.

Moreover, other diagnoses share symptoms attributed to DID/MPD. For example, there is a disturbance of sense of self in borderline personality disorder; a lack of integration of memories in dementia, blackouts, or concussions; there are disturbances in perception associated with many psychiatric disorders; and there are varying levels of consciousness in those experiencing partial seizures and sometimes the effects of prescription medications.

Kluft adds:

"Put simply DID is nothing more elaborate than a little child weeping in bed at night wishing they were someone else, somewhere else..."

Is there a human being who has not at sometime wished she were someone else, somewhere else?

"It's a way of trying to cope with overwhelming circumstances. Often that's abuse."

This is a hypothesis. Where is the

evidence? An extensive review of the published literature appearing in the 2004 *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*<sup>[3]</sup> found no evidence to support Kluft's assertion.

There is an abundance of retrospective interpretation in DID therapy (as well as therapies for other conditions). The historical accuracy and reliability of such retrospective interpretations should be taken with informed and healthy skepticism.

To therapists such as Kluft, repression (inherited from psychoanalytic therapy) is accepted as fact. Speculating on children's "defense mechanisms" or coping skills (i.e. repression) is a retrospective distortion and carries little weight when compared to the detailed observational studies of children. In fact prospective studies (which carry much less bias) have shown how unreliable retrospective recollections may be.

There are many other problems with this hypothesis. Kluft comments:

"Certainly there are places in the world where awful things of abuse are happening—where you're watching genocide, you're watching people starve to death, overwhelming experiences that you just can't bear. It often helps to be able to separate those kinds of behaviors. When that occurs in connection with trauma, you often get such extreme separation that you get something like DID. "

If overwhelming circumstances are cited as "causation" factors, then where are all the African, Afghan, South Asian, South American, and Eastern European women (and men) who have been through much more "overwhelming circumstances" than their North American White counterparts? And why wasn't there an epidemic of MPD/DID among the men and women who were Holocaust survivors?

Kluft declares:

"DID isn't rare at all."

It would have been more responsi-

ble had Kluft stated that he *thinks* or *believes* that MPD/DID is not rare. If he had answered honestly, he would have added that MPD was considered a very rare disorder until after the books and movies *The Three Faces of Eve* and *Sybil* appeared. In 1980, there were only 200 cases in world history. By 1986 there were 6,000 recorded cases and the number has continued to explode.

"What is problematic is that most people aren't taught how to systematically screen for it."

This seems contradictory. If the disease is common, then why is it not diagnosed more often? Kluft would have us believe that it is because "most people aren't taught how to systematically screen for it."

There are tests readily available on the Web that claim to screen for MPD/DID. For example at: <http://counsellingresource.com/quizzes/des/index.html> there can be found: Dissociative Experiences Scale, A Screening Test for Dissociative Identity Disorder. It is a 28-question self-test. (See box page 6/7) The first two questions are indicative of all:

1. Some people have the experience of driving or riding in a car or bus or subway and suddenly realizing that they don't remember what has happened during all or part of the trip.

(Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)

2. Some people find that sometimes they are listening to someone talk and they suddenly realize that they did not hear part or all of what was said.

(Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)

Perhaps MPD/DID is not diagnosed as often as Kluft would like because others see the screening tests as a description of normal human experience.

Kluft comments:

"If you look at 100 consecutive psychiatric patients probably somewhere between 1 and 5 percent will have previously unknown DID."

If dissociative experience scales similar to the items above were used, I am surprised that the percentage was so low.

Kluft is asked: "How many personalities can a child come up with?" He replies:

"The number can be astronomical, in the hundreds or even higher."

Kluft could have mentioned that in addition to the enormous growth in the number of MPD/DID cases, there has also been inflation of the number of alters. Twenty years ago, the mean number of alters per case was perhaps ten. Now it is up to sixteen to twenty. In a 1988 article, Richard Kluft wrote that he had a patient with more than 4,500 alters and another with more than 4,000.<sup>[4]</sup>

Can children under twelve actually articulate highly abstract slippery concepts such as personalities? Most of the information comes from adults in therapy who believe they have recovered memories of their childhoods.

Kluft:

".. it's not at all unusual for children with a religious backgrounds to form personalities based on even angels or saints or even Jesus..."

"It's not all that unusual for people with a Native American background to form alters that are based on certain tribal totemic animals..."

"One patient was brought up by parents who were movie fans and hoped that their daughter would somehow become an actress. You can bet that she came up with an amazing stable of different alters, many of them based on famous Hollywood celebrities. That is what is in her environment and that is what she learned to use in order to cope."

In the MPD literature there are descriptions of alters of people of the opposite sex, of the treating therapist, of infants, television characters, and demons. There have been descriptions of dog, cat, duck, and lobster alters. There have been alters of people thou-

sands of years old or from another dimension.<sup>[5]</sup>

According to Kluft:

“There are two superstar cases in the history of DID. One of those is Eve, *The Three Faces of Eve*. ... has gone public. ... She’s written a number of books about her treatment and about her life after treatment. She is really a wonderful example of how a person can come together from this disorder and have a productive life and make a very solid contribution.”

I always wondered why MPD/DID patients are so attached to their diagnosis and so territorial about it when most psychiatric patients don’t want to be “labeled.”

“*Sybil* is a wonderful landmark case. She is someone who made a very successful recovery and had a wonderful career but did not go public. Unlike Eve, she opted for a very quiet and reserved and private life.”

It is less than honest for Kluft to omit mention of the fact that tapes of sessions of *Sybil* with her psychiatrist Cornelia Wilbur, M.D., have shown that at least some of *Sybil*’s alters were the consequence of highly suggestive therapy that used hypnosis and drugs. It is less than honest to omit the information that another psychiatrist who worked with *Sybil* did not agree that she had MPD.<sup>[6]</sup>

In the end, one has to ask if board certified psychiatrists find “little consensus regarding the diagnostic status of DID,” should Kluft be regarded as a prophet or profiteer? Usually MPD/DID treatment of the kind Kluft describes is a lengthy process. At a time when psychiatry and medicine seek the most efficient way in which to help a patient back to productive status, drawing out many “alters” and excavating decades-old “memories” and then taking years of treatment to integrate them back to one functioning productive self seems self-serving from the perspective of therapist fees. Might those who treat MPD/DID in

this manner actually be a hidden special-interest group perpetrating an illusion through the entertainment media? *Numan Gharaibeh, M.D.: Principal Psychiatrist, Western Connecticut Mental Health Network, Danbury, CT. General Psychiatry at New York Medical College, Forensic Psychiatry at Massachusetts Mental Health Center, Boston.*

1. Why is it that Jeckyl and Hyde are not spoken about often when DID/MPD is mentioned? Is it because Dr. Jeckyl does not fit the current theories of DID enthusiasts (a male, no indication of sexual abuse, no memories to recover from repression, no savior therapist, a villain not a victim).
2. Pope, H.G., et al. (1999). Attitudes toward DSM-IV dissociative disorders diagnoses among board-certified *American psychiatrists*. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 156, 321-323.
3. Piper, A. & Merskey, H. (2004). The persistence of folly: A critical examination of Dissociative Identity Disorder, Part 1: The excesses of an improbable disorder and Part 2: The defence and decline of Multiple Personality or Dissociative Identity Disorder. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* Vol 49(9), 592-600 and Vol 49(10), 678-683.
4. Kluft, R. (1988). The phenomenology and treatment of extremely complex multiple personality disorder. *Dissociation*, 1 (4), 47-58
5. Piper, A. (1998). Multiple personality disorder: Witchcraft survives in the twentieth Century. *Skeptical Inquirer*, May/June, 44-50.
6. See FMSF Newsletter May/June 2006, Volume 15 No. 3 ...



Excerpt from interview with  
Diablo Cody, the writer of  
“United States of Tara”

“Have viewers recognized themselves in Tara, said, ‘Maybe I have this disorder’? Have you gotten that reaction?” asked Smith

“Yeah, it surprises me,” Cody said.  
“People actually have said that.”

Smith, T. (2009, March 8). Unraveling the secret of “alters”. Doctors are of two minds about multiple personality disorder. CBS Sunday Morning. Retrieved on March 9, 2009 from <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/03/08/sunday/main4852177.shtml>

**Dissociative Experiences Scale, A Screening Test for Dissociative Identity Disorder.**

<http://counsellingresource.com/quizzes/des/index.html>

Please note: This test will only be scored correctly if you answer each one of the questions.

1. Some people have the experience of driving or riding in a car or bus or subway and suddenly realizing that they don't remember what has happened during all or part of the trip. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
2. Some people find that sometimes they are listening to someone talk and they suddenly realize that they did not hear part or all of what was said. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
3. Some people have the experience of finding themselves in a place and having no idea how they got there. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
4. Some people have the experience of finding themselves dressed in clothes that they don't remember putting on. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
5. Some people have the experience of finding new things among their belongings that they do not remember buying. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
6. Some people sometimes find that they are approached by people that they do not know who call them by another name or insist that they have met them before. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
7. Some people sometimes have the experience of feeling as though they are standing next to themselves or watching themselves do something and they actually see themselves as if they were looking at another person. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
8. Some people are told that they sometimes do not recognize friends or family members. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
9. Some people find that they have no memory for some important events in their lives (for example, a wedding or graduation). (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
10. Some people have the experience of being accused of lying when they do not think that they have lied. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
11. Some people have the experience of looking in a mirror and not recognizing themselves. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
12. Some people have the experience of feeling that other people, objects, and the world around them are not real. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
13. Some people have the experience of feeling that their body does not seem to belong to them. (Never)ooooooooooooo(Always)
14. Some people have the experience of sometimes remembering a past event so vividly that they feel as if they were reliving that event.



(Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

15. Some people have the experience of not being sure whether things that they remember happening really did happen or whether they just dreamed them.

(Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

16. Some people have the experience of being in a familiar place but finding it strange and unfamiliar. (Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

17. Some people find that when they are watching television or a movie they become so absorbed in the story that they are unaware of other events happening around them.

(Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

18. Some people find that they become so involved in a fantasy or daydream that it feels as though it were really happening to them.

(Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

19. Some people find that they sometimes are able to ignore pain.

(Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

20. Some people find that that they sometimes sit staring off into space, thinking of nothing, and are not aware of the passage of time.

(Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

21. Some people sometimes find that when they are alone they talk out loud to themselves.

(Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

22. Some people find that in one situation they may act so differently compared with another situation that they feel almost as if they were two different people.

(Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

23. Some people sometimes find that in certain situations they are able to do things with amazing ease and spontaneity that would usually be difficult for them (for example, sports, work, social situations, etc.).

(Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

24. Some people sometimes find that they cannot remember whether they have done something or have just thought about doing it (for example, not knowing whether they have just mailed a letter or have just thought about mailing it). (Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

25. Some people find evidence that they have done things that they do not remember doing.

(Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

26. Some people sometimes find writings, drawings, or notes among their belongings that they must have done but cannot remember doing. (Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

27. Some people sometimes find that they hear voices inside their head that tell them to do things or comment on things that they are doing. (Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

28. Some people sometimes feel as if they are looking at the world through a fog so that people and objects appear far away or unclear.

(Never)ooooooooooooo (Always)

### Misinterpreting Psychogenic Amnesia as Traumatic Amnesia

“Psychogenic amnesia is a rare syndrome whose hallmark is sudden, massive retrograde memory loss, including some loss of personal identity, which cannot be attributed to a direct physical insult to the brain (Kihlstrom & Schacter, 2000). Neurologists assessing these cases can sometimes identify antecedent stressors, but these are seldom traumatic (e.g., difficulties at work). Moreover, it is unclear whether the stressor precipitated the syndrome or coincidentally preceded it (McNally, 2003, pp 186-189). The term *psychogenic* implies the absence of an obvious organic cause rather than an identified psychological etiology. Most cases of psychogenic amnesia remit within hours, days, or weeks, and often without therapeutic intervention.

“The striking differences between the syndrome of psychogenic amnesia and reports of traumatic dissociative amnesia mean that they are dissimilar clinical constructs. With traumatic dissociative amnesia, a person is (allegedly) unable to recall a specific traumatic event rather than being entirely unable to recall his or her past. Persons alleged to have repressed memories of trauma do not entirely forget their personalities.” p 276

Geraerts, E. & McNally, R.J. (2008). Assessment of recovered and false memories. In R. Rogers (Ed.) *Clinical Assessment of Malingering and Deception* (3rd ed). 274-284. New York: Guilford.

“More important than learning how to recall things is finding ways to forget things.”

Eric Butterworth

“I have a photographic memory, but I don't have same-day service.”

Peggy D. Joseph

### Therapy Cult in Perth, Western Australia

Matthew Meinck is a self-styled New Age “healer” near Perth, Western Australia who believes that people retain body memories of past abuse. Meinck, a former monk, also believes that he can release those memories during two-week-long retreats that he organizes. He uses regressive therapy, intensive meditation, and deep-tissue massages. *FMSF Newsletter* readers will surely not be surprised to learn that most of his patients recover “memories” of being sexually abused by their parents. Now, at least eight irate former patients have gone to the police and the media in an effort to expose what they claim has become a cult. Their aim is to have Meinck's counseling business shut down.

*The Sunday Times* of Perth investigated the allegations. The paper had the complainants sign oaths that their stories were true. Among the former patients was one woman who said that Meinck talked her into telling her parents that she needed space from them because they were harming her. She said that she has not seen her parents for several years even though she no longer believes they ever hurt her. Another person told about the thousands and thousands of dollars she spent. One man said he had even confessed to “raping” his children and a babysitter. Fortunately, he realized that his memories were false after treatment at a local hospital.

Michael Meinck refused to comment on the article and was not available for an interview. Michael Meinck, a charismatic leader, is an example of the problems that can arise when counselors are not regulated.

Eagan, C. (2009, January 17). Bizarre secret cult ripping families apart. PerthNow. Retrieved on March 12, 1009 from <http://www.news.com.au/perthnow/story/0,21598,24926123-948,00.html>



## A Big Step Closer to Erasing Frightening Memories

Han, J., Kushner, S.A., Yiu, A.P., Hsiang, H., Buck, T., Waisman, A., Bontempi, B., Neve, R.L., Frankland, P.W., Josselyn, S.A. (2009, March 13). Selective erasure of a fear memory. *Science*, 323, 1492-1496.

The inspiration for the 2004 science fiction film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* was the work of researchers headed by Sheena Josselyn at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.<sup>[1]</sup> In the movie, two ex-lovers decided to erase their memories of each other. Later, in spite of the treatment, they reunited.

Although the idea of altering our memories has been the stuff of fiction, such as George Orwell's *1984*, recently researchers have been working to try to find ways to help people cope with the aftermath of horrible events. They are experimenting with altering memory for therapeutic purposes so that conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder might be avoided.

In what has been described as "an ingenious set of experiments," Josselyn and colleagues have been able to identify the fear-storing neurons in the amygdala region of mice. (It is considered almost certain that human fear-storing neurons would be located in the same region of the amygdala.) The researchers were then able to inject a virus that killed the neurons where the fearful memory was stored.

Karim Nader, a professor of neuroscience at McGill University stated: "The elegance of this one, which goes orders of magnitude beyond other studies, is that now they didn't do something that was global to all neurons in the lateral nucleus. They can kill only the neurons that they think express the memory."

The experiment did not destroy the brain's entire capacity to remember fear, just the specific recollection in the experiment. The researchers suggest that there is hope that they will some-

day be able to remove the terror from terrifying memories. For example, the sights and sounds of a car accident would remain, but the memory of the fear could be removed.

1. Hall, J. (2009, March 13). Should painful memories be erased? *Toronto Star*. Retrieved on March 15, 2009 from <http://www.thestar.com/article/601600>.

See

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/323/5920/1507b/DC1> for a transcript of a podcast interview with researcher Sheena Josselyn.



## I Remember—or Do I?

Sabbagh, K. (2009). *Remembering Our Childhood: How Memory Betrays Us*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Karl Sabbagh is a British professional writer and television documentary producer. He is skilled at explaining complicated matters in a way in which non-experts can understand, and he is also able to do it in an entertaining manner.

*Remembering Our Childhood* is a wonderfully written book about memory. Sabbagh begins with stories of people telling what they remember from their childhoods and then uses these stories to bring scientific research to life to show how easily our memories may be reshaped or even false memories planted. His interviews with memory researchers are colorful and interesting, in part because he freely expresses his own perspectives.

Using the research that demonstrates how unreliable our early childhood memories may be, Sabbagh argues passionately against 'recovered memory therapies.' He leads readers into the memory wars through the consequences of some legal cases, noting that courts have not yet fully accepted the implications of the new memory research. Sabbagh insists that objective scientific inquiry must be the basis for making sound legal judgments.

Sabbagh is truly sympathetic to falsely accused families. He writes

about his thoughts at a meeting of the British False Memory Society:

"When I raised the accusation, often put forward by those who believe in the repression of memory, that the BFMS was full of child abusers, the engineer said: 'Look, if you were really a child abuser, it's not the sort of thing you would want to tell *anyone* else about. Even when you're falsely accused you think twice about telling someone. But the outrage at the injustice of a false accusation is greater than that reluctance and it's *that* that drives you to seek the help and emotional support of a society like this.' This rang true with me. After all, if sex abusers all band together and pretend to be innocent, why aren't their established societies of murderers, burglars, and embezzlers doing the same thing?" (p. 174)

*FMSF Newsletter* readers will likely find new information in this book. They may also view it as a book that would be good to give to friends or family members who do not fully understand the memory wars.



## Canadian Scientists Find That Child Abuse Causes Brain Changes

Patrick O McGowan, Aya Sasaki, Ana C D'Alessio, Sergiy Dymov, Benoit Labonté, Moshe Szyf, Gustavo Turecki, Michael J Meaney (2009) Epigenetic regulation of the glucocorticoid receptor in human brain associates with childhood abuse. *Nature Neuroscience*, 12 (3), 342-348.

For many years, psychiatrists have claimed that abused or neglected children have a greater probability of suffering from mental problems such as anxiety or depression later in life. Yet, other abused children are resilient. They somehow manage in spite of having horrible childhoods. Scientists would like to know why some people are resilient and others are not and they have been working to understand how abuse or neglect might affect the brain.

A team of scientists from McGill University in Montreal has taken a big



step forward. Led by Michael Meaney, the team in the past has shown how affectionate maternal care can change the expression of genes in animals such that they show less physiological response to stress. These changes (biological buffers) are passed on to the next generation.

The changes they have observed are referred to as "epigenetic." An epigenetic change is something that changes the activation of genes without changing the DNA structure.

In the current study, the team examined the brains of 24 people who had committed suicide. Twelve of the people had been abused or neglected as children and 12 had not. The researchers obtained the childhood history of each person through extensive interviews with family members and by examining medical records. They even accounted for whether victims suffered mood disorders, alcoholism or drug addictions.

The results showed that the people who had been abused or neglected as children showed epigenetic changes that most likely made them more biologically sensitive to stress. This suggests that the trauma of child abuse or neglect might be associated with an alteration in the way in which a person's genes express themselves. These results appear to translate the research done with laboratory animals to humans.

Does this research show that child-abuse causes mental disorders? Not yet. First, the direction of causality is not certain; the observed effects might be caused by the abuse itself, or they might be caused by some other confounding variable that is associated with the abuse. For example, children who are abused or neglected are probably more likely than non-abused children to have suffered other harms, such as poor nutrition, infectious diseases, and other problems.

Thus it is not clear what the specific causal factor might be. Also, the

investigators did not specify what types of abuse occurred in the 12 victims; they mention that it was only "severe." Thus there are many questions still unanswered. "The bottom line is that this is a terrific line of work, but there is a very long way to go either to understand the effect of early experience or the causes of mental disorders," explained Dr. Steven Hyman,<sup>[1]</sup> professor of neurobiology at Harvard.

1. Quoted in Carey, B. (2009, February 24). After abuse, changes in the brain. *New York Times*. Retrieved on March 20, 2009 from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/24/health/research/24abuse.html>.



### **Nebraska Murder Case Based on 30-Hour Cognitive Interview is Dismissed<sup>[1]</sup>**

In October 2008, the murder charge against Donald J. Sykora was dismissed. In 2005, prosecutors had accused Sykora of the 1971 murder of his wife based primarily on the testimony of his step-daughter Lenora Kay Parker who had recovered memories in a 30-hour highly suggestive cognitive interview in 2004. Parker had been four-years-old at the time of her mother's death, and no charges were filed at the time. (See *FMSF Newsletter*, Vol 16 No. 4)

The case was dismissed because Sarpy County District Judge William Zastera concluded that there was no way to determine what Parker really remembered and what memories could have been suggested by other influences. Judge Zastera disallowed Parker's testimony because her memory had been enhanced by a 30-hour cognitive interview, a technique he said was not scientific and could produce false memories. Without the testimony of Lenora Parker, prosecutors did not have enough evidence to proceed.

According to media reports, two federal agents and a police officer interviewed Lenora Parker for four days in a row. The interview was conducted in a meeting room in a fire sta-

tion that had been converted to a more relaxing environment with items such as a recliner, a sofa and soft lights. In a cognitive interview, subjects are first asked open-ended questions and they respond in a narrative fashion.

The purpose of the interview was to help Lenora Parker remember the details of her alleged vision of her father strangling her mother. The interview was not tape recorded. Instead, one officer took notes as he sat in another room and observed. During the interview, the group left to visit the grave of Parker's mother.

In a 2007 hearing, Daniel Wilson, chair of the Creighton University psychiatry department, testified that there is no scientific evidence to show that a cognitive interview is a reliable way to extract a traumatic memory from an adult who had witnessed an event 33 years earlier when she was 4. Wilson was concerned about the great duration of the interview and the impact of the visit to the mother's grave.

In that same hearing, Ronald Fisher, a Florida International University professor of experimental psychology, testified that cognitive interviews are as reliable or more reliable than standard police interviews. He said people usually provide more information in a cognitive interview.

In a 2007 decision, Judge Zastera noted that the Parker interview did not follow recommendations for standard cognitive interviews and that the questions of a federal agent were so suggestive that Parker's testimony would not be reliable.

1. *State of Nebraska v. Donald J. Sykora*, CR 05-148, District Court of Sarpy County. (January, 2007).

Baez, L (2008, October 28). Sarpy prosecutors lose hope in 1971 homicide case. *Omaha World Herald*. Retrieved on February 15, 2009 from [http://www.omaha.com/index.php?u\\_page=2798&u\\_sid=10471578&u\\_rss=1](http://www.omaha.com/index.php?u_page=2798&u_sid=10471578&u_rss=1) & See Whitehouse, W.G., Orne, E.C., Dinges, D.F., Bates, B.L., Nadon, R., Orne, M.T. (2005, Summer). The cognitive interview: Does it successfully avoid the dangers of forensic hypnosis? *American Journal of Psychology* 118(2), 213-234.

### Update: Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to hear appeal of former priest Paul R. Shanley

*Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Paul Shanley,*

Supreme Judicial Court, Middlesex County, No. SJC-10382

In May, 2009, the highest court in Massachusetts will hear an appeal from the defrocked priest Paul R. Shanley who was convicted in 2005 of raping and fondling Paul Busa. Last November, Paul Shanley's motion for a new trial had been denied by the trial judge. In agreeing to hear Shanley's appeal, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) has indicated the issues in the case are important enough to bypass the Appeals Court.

Shanley was convicted on the basis of Busa's 2002 recovery of a repressed memory. A critical point of the appeal is that Shanley's trial attorney, Frank Mondano, failed to effectively challenge the admissibility of "repressed memory" evidence. Robert F. Shaw, Jr. of Cambridge, Massachusetts is representing Shanley in the appeal.

The Massachusetts law on the admission of repressed memory evidence was set in 2001 in *Commonwealth v. Frangipane*. Although the Supreme Judicial Court in that case initially acknowledged that there was a significant controversy in the scientific literature, it then modified its issued opinion to say that scientific controversy was confined to the mechanisms of memory and indeed there was no controversy in the scientific literature about the validity of repressed and recovered memory. This modification came about after an amicus brief was filed, post-decision, by the Leadership Council<sup>[1]</sup> that appeared to review the scientific literature but, in our view, was riddled with serious errors and omissions. It appears that appellant Frangipane was not permitted to respond to the brief filed by the Leadership Council. Nor were any other interested parties solicited for input.

The Supreme Judicial Court's decision in this case will be an important comment on the legal status of "repressed memories" in the legal system at this point in time.

1. Murphy, W.J. (2001, March 30). Brief of the Leadership Council, Submitted to Commonwealth of Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in *Commonwealth v. Frangipane*, SJC-08359.

See (<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20090316/wypijewski> for an update of this case.

"The past is really almost as much a work of the imagination as the future."

Jessamyn West

### Background of Shanley Case—Reprinted from FMSF 2005 March/April Newsletter 14 (2).

On February 7, 2005, a Boston jury found defrocked Roman Catholic priest Paul Shanley guilty of sexually abusing now 27-year-old Boston fireman Paul Busa when he was a young child. Shanley, age 74, was sentenced to 12-15 years in prison.

The evidence in the case consisted entirely of Busa's recovered memories. Busa testified that his girlfriend called him on January 31 to tell him about a Boston Globe article about Shanley.<sup>[1]</sup> Busa said he was surprised because everyone had liked Shanley. His girlfriend called again on February 11 to tell him that his friend Gregory Ford was accusing Shanley. Busa then called Ford. He testified that his own memories then started coming back. "I felt like my world was coming to an end."<sup>[2]</sup> At the time, Busa was a military police officer in Colorado.

On February 12, Busa visited a military therapist and then flew to Boston. According to investigative reporter Jo Ann Wypijewski,<sup>[3]</sup> the ticket was paid for by attorney Rod MacLeish who was representing Ford. Busa also met with the same mental health professionals as Ford

and he also retained MacLeish. After Busa returned to Colorado and entered counseling, he was told to start a journal of his memories. He backdated the journal to February 1. Busa was discharged from the military in April.

In the 1970s, Father Shanley was known as a charismatic "street priest" who worked with troubled adolescents and supported gay rights. Until the criminal trial, no one had ever accused Shanley of being sexually involved with young children. There were, however, claims of his involvement with adolescents or young adults in the 60s and 70s.

After the publication of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Boston Globe series and a later press conference by attorney MacLeish, Shanley became one of, if not the, most high-profile figures in the church abuse scandals. Shanley is one of the few priests to be criminally charged in Massachusetts. Because he had moved to California in 1990, the clock stopped on the 15 year statute of limitations.

There were two young men, besides Ford and Busa who made claims against Shanley. They all attended the same Catholic religious classes at St. Jean L'Evangeliste in Newton, Mass. They all said that Shanley would take them out of class and rape them in the rectory, confessional and restroom from the time they were six until they were 11 or 12. They all claimed that they immediately forgot being raped or abused and that they recovered the memories after the Globe article. They all had the same lawyer. There is no record of any person during those years who noticed anything unusual involving the boys and Shanley.

In April 2004, all four received settlements from the Church in civil cases. Ford is said to have received more

than \$1.4 million and Busa received \$500,000.

In July 2004, prosecutors said that “in order to make this the most manageable case for a jury to hear,” it would drop Ford and another person from the case. A great deal had been learned about Gregory Ford and his life that caused many questions about the reliability of his memories. The other accuser was dropped on the day jury selection began because no one could find him.

The trial began in mid-January and was shown on CourtTV. Busa sobbed during some of his highly emotional testimony, and his wife described his awful pain and suffering after he recovered memories. Classmates and two former teachers from the school took the stand. None of the classmates testified that they ever saw Shanley remove anyone from class, although students were sent out of the class. One student testified that he had once been sent to Shanley who had told him to stop giving the teacher a hard time and sent him right back to class. Under cross-examination, teachers could not recall Shanley taking children out of class. One stated that Busa would not even have been in the religious class at the age he claimed.

James Chu, M.D., an associate professor at Harvard Medical School, was an expert for the prosecution. He testified that repressed memory is more common among people who suffered repeated trauma as children than in those who suffered a single traumatic event. “It really is more this repeated trauma that tends to be forgotten by some mechanism.” He noted that memories can return in a flood of images and physical symptoms such as anxiety and sleeplessness, all of which Busa said he experienced. Dr. Chu used the term “dissociative barrier” to describe the mechanism that keeps traumatic memories locked up. Under cross-examination, Chu acknowledged the intense debate about the validity of

repressed memories and that false memories can be implanted.

Elizabeth Loftus, Ph.D., the only witness for the defense, testified that her research shows that people can come to sincerely believe implanted memories. On cross-examination, prosecutor Rooney asked Loftus about statements she had made about repressed memories in the past that were at odds with her current statements. Loftus was unable to complete her answers, and defense attorney Mondano did not follow up on redirect.

In closing arguments, Prosecutor Rooney said that the emotion Busa showed when he testified was evidence that he was not fabricating his claims. “The emotions were raw. They were real. They were reflective of the pain he experienced,” she said. In his closing, defense attorney Frank Mondano argued that Busa’s story was not reliable and that he made up the story to get the money from a civil trial. Prosecutor Rooney argued that Busa already had the money from the civil trial so that would not explain his willingness to endure the pain of the criminal trial.

The jury deliberated 13 hours before reaching its decision. Jury member Victoria Blier remarked that the jury agreed after discussion that you can experience something up to a point, and then not think about it and have plenty of other things in your life that are more important.

1. Pfeiffer, S. (2002, January 31). Famed ‘street priest’ preyed upon boys. *Boston Globe*, p. A21.
2. Lavoie, D. (2005, January 26). Shanley’s accuser testifies at child rape trial. Associated Press State & Local Wire, 4:56 Wednesday, BC cycle.
3. Wypijewski, J. (2004, September-October). The passion of Father Paul Shanley. *LegalAffairs*. Retrieved February 9, 2005, from [http://www.legalaffairs.org/issues/September-October-2004/features\\_wypijewski\\_sepoct04.html](http://www.legalaffairs.org/issues/September-October-2004/features_wypijewski_sepoct04.html).  
See also:  
Ballou, B., & Lawrence, J. (2005, February

8). Shanley guilty; verdict delivers ‘victory,’ vindication. *Boston Herald*, p. 7.

Kukjian, S., & Cullen, K. (2002, June 21). Grand jury indicts Shanley, charges rape of four boys. *Boston Globe*, p. A22.

Lavoie, D. (2005, January 31). State wraps up case against defrocked priest. Associated Press.

Lavoie, D. (2005, February 7). Defrocked priest convicted in notorious clergy sex abuse case. Associated Press, Monday, BC cycle.



### **Update: Louisiana— Ponchatoula Sexual-abuse Case**

Mitchell, D.J. (2009, February 16). Prison time could be avoided with plea. *Advocate*. Retrieved on March 12, 2009 from <http://www.2theadvocate.com/news/39743437.html>

Robbin Lamonica, the estranged wife of convicted former Hosanna Church pastor Louis D. Lamonica, pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice in an agreement with prosecutors. The terms of her “best interests of justice” plea may allow Robbin Lamonica to avoid prison. She did not admit to a specific act, but agreed that prosecutors have enough evidence to get a conviction. As part of the plea agreement, prosecutors dismissed the counts of rape and aggravated oral sexual battery against her, and Robbin Lamonica will testify at future trials in the Hosanna case.

(The following is reprinted from the Fall 2008 Newsletter.)

Louis Lamonica, who was convicted in September 2008, was the second of the seven members of the Hosanna Church in Ponchatoula who were indicted in 2005 of child abuse that allegedly took place, sometimes with satanic rituals, at the church. The first co-defendant, a youth minister at the church, Austin “Trey” Bernard, III was convicted in December 2007 and is serving a life sentence.<sup>[1]</sup>

Ponchatoula is a small, rural town halfway between New Orleans and Baton Rouge situated on the northwest rim of Lake Pontchartrain. The Assemblies of God Hosanna Church



was started in 1975. It thrived, growing to a congregation of almost 1,000, until the 1984 death of the founder, Louis Lamonica's father (also named Louis Lamonica). After a series of interim pastors, the church passed on to Lamonica in 1993. Parishioners, however, left the church in droves and at some point the church lost its Assemblies of God affiliation. There was no oversight.

The history of the Hosanna Church is relevant because Lamonica's defense argued that he had confessed to crimes he had not committed because he was under the sway of Lois Mowbray.<sup>[2]</sup> According to trial testimony, a parishioner named Lois Mowbray became Hosanna's associate pastor soon after Lamonica took over the church. Mowbray seems to have been responsible for the fact that Sunday worship sermons were replaced by many hours of praising God and altar calls in which Mowbray told one of the congregants that he or she had to confess to a sin (about which Mowbray had learned from God). Mowbray kept a 586-page journal in which other parishioners were supposed to write out confessions to sex acts. <sup>[3]</sup> According to trial testimony, Mowbray taught the "concept of spiritual thought, where lusting after a person was the same as physically having sex."<sup>[4]</sup> Mowbray taught that if a person thought about a sin, it was the same as if the person had done it and the person had to confess it.

Mowbray insisted that Lamonica's sons write about abuse in her book. When one son refused, Mowbray had his mother lock him in his room and destroy all his belongings. He finally broke down and said he had been abused.

According to his attorney, Lamonica refused to respond to the altar call to confess. This caused Mowbray to make a concerted effort to get him to change. She persuaded Lamonica's wife to force him to leave his home and to live in the church. He

had to work for \$10. a day at an electrical company that Mowbray and some other church members owned, and he also had to clean the church. Other church members humiliated and beat him.

One detective actually referred to Mowbray as the leader of the church and suggested that there was much infighting among the congregation of 15.<sup>[5]</sup> Under the leadership of Lamonica and then Mowbray, the congregation dwindled to 10 or 15 people. Worship consisted of prophetically inspired public confessions and vomiting in order to cast out demons of sin. One witness stated: "The worship team would crowd around them and pray over them. This would make them start to throw up."<sup>[4]</sup> By the time the church closed in 2003, it had become a cult. One person testified that toward the end, strangers who might come to service were turned away at the door. The church members had virtually no contact with anyone outside the church.

Authorities first learned about the Hosanna church abuse accusations in April 2005 when Nicole Bernard, wife of the youth minister at the church, telephoned the Ponchatoula Sheriff's Office to say that her daughter had been abused from infancy until she was three by Louis Lamonica. The very next day, Lamonica walked into the sheriff's office and described sexual offenses at the church which included his abusing children for the past five or six years. The detective with whom he spoke said that Lamonica was not confessing but trying to be helpful. "He didn't come to turn himself in, he came to talk with us."<sup>[6]</sup> Lamonica, however, was immediately arrested. Lamonica testified that Mowbray told him that she had made a deal with the Sheriff's Office that he would not be arrested if he told about the abuse and satanic child-sex ring.

After the revelations by Lamonica, investigators used digging equipment and cadaver dogs to search the grounds

of the church. They apparently hired Dawn Perlmutter, Ph.D. to help them in their search for evidence of satanic cult activity, but no evidence was ever found. After the expansive publicity about satanic activity, those charges were dropped. Authorities did find hundred of pages of diaries written by both Lamonica and the boys that described abuse.

In addition to the confession that Lamonica made to authorities, the prosecution also presented testimony from four mental-health professionals to whom his sons, now 18 and 22, had spoken of the abuse in spring of 2005. In late 2005, however, both boys retracted their abuse stories. They told the jury that they had never been abused and said that their confessions were the result of Lois Mowbray's control. Mowbray had directed their mother to make the boys write down incidents of abuse. Mowbray and the mother would suggest topics to the boys and they were supposed to fill in the details. The prosecution's experts discounted the retractions.

One of the children's therapists said that his symptoms of Tourette's Syndrome <sup>[7]</sup> got worse after he confessed. The doctor who treated the Tourette's said that even though the boys had been threatened which prompted their original confessions "The story was being told in a consistent way in words that were consistent with their own development level." A doctor who had found no physical evidence of any abuse said that both false and true recantations are not unusual in child abuse cases. A child might recant because he or she did not want the parent to be arrested.<sup>[8]</sup>

The defense had planned to have an expert testify about how to judge the veracity of abuse allegations made by children. The judge did not allow this testimony saying that such testimony was inadmissible under Louisiana state Supreme Court precedent because it is the jury and not the

expert who determines the truth of witness testimony.

The prosecution asked Lamonica why he suffered the humiliation and made the confession. They wondered why he did not leave the cult. Lamonica said that he confessed because he had come to believe that it was the only way in which he could hold his family together. There appeared to be no explanation for why Lamonica did not leave the church.

Assistant District Attorney Don Wall prosecuted the Lamonica case. The defense attorney was Michael Thiel who also defended Austin Bernard, III. State District Judge Zoey Waguespack presided. It appears that the next person to be tried will be Paul Fontenot, a member of the Hosanna Church.

1. See *FMS Foundation Newsletter*, 2008 Vol 17 No. 1)

2. Lemoine, D. (2008, August 30). Ex-Hosanna pastor: Confession forced. Retrieved on 9/9/08 from <http://www.2theadvocate.com/news/27687024.html?showAll=y&c=y>.

3. Grinberg, E. (2005, August 3). Claims of brainwashing, child abuse and a cult-like sex ring to be aired in court. CourtTVNews. Retrieved on 9/8/08 from [http://www.courtstv.com/trials/news/0705/29\\_bernard\\_ctv.html](http://www.courtstv.com/trials/news/0705/29_bernard_ctv.html)

4. Lemoine, D. (2008, September 1). Pastor's trial may resume this week. 2theadvocate.com. Retrieved on 9/9/08 from <http://www.2theadvocate.com/news/27748934.html>

5. Lemoine, D. (2008, August 29). Hosanna church rites described as cultlike. 2theadvocate.com. Retrieved on 9/9/08 from <http://www.2theadvocate.com/news/27646729.html>

6. Lyman, R. (2005, May 25). Sex charges follow a church's collapse. New York Times. Retrieved on 12/5/07 from

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/25/national/25church.html?>

7. Tourette's syndrome (TS) is a neurological disorder characterized by repetitive, stereotyped, involuntary movements and vocalizations called tics. Tics are often worse with excitement or anxiety and better during calm, focused activities.

8. Lemoine, D. (2008, August 27). Experts testify on abuse. 2theadvocate.com. Retrieved on 9/9/08 from <http://www.2theadvocate.com/news/27516669.html>

"Memory is the thing you forget with."

Alexander Chase

F R O M O U R

R E A D E R S

### Christmas Dinner

Our daughter "came back" in the year 2000, after being gone for 10 years. She has had one or two relapses since then, but, in our opinion, she is now 99.9999 percent back to her former self. She and her husband and their dog spent a week with us. On Christmas Day, my son also came and we all had dinner together for the first time in 18 years. Many thanks to FMSF for your work and encouragement.

A mom and dad



### Some Things Never Change

Some things never change—some do. There has been a slight change in my situation in that my daughter's three children have become very loving, as they were years ago. They no longer live close by, but when they visit they come to see me and show me much affection. I am thankful for these small mercies along with the happy memories of times past."

My grandson and his fiancé were having so much trouble planning their wedding because of the alienation in the family that they decided to elope. They sent me pictures and look so happy.

A mom



### Enough Already!

What struck me most in the last newsletter were the letters from readers. It is an old subject, but one that bothers me. I feel that some parents are stuck in the past, waiting for something to change that will bring their truant children back to them. In my opinion, some of these parents unnecessarily punish themselves. They can not, nor should not, feel responsible for the behavior of their children. Nor should they wait for the miraculous day when

low and behold, their children return.

I have been patient with my daughter. I too have attempted to reach out to her and at the same time giving her time to "grow up." But I finally said: "Enough, already!" When my daughter wants something, she gets close. When she doesn't, she ignores me. She is 35 and has had ample time to grow up. I am moving on. I am no longer waiting for this twisted child to return with love.

These wayward children are damaged, broken in one manner or another. If they someday see the light of their waywardness, wonderful. But it is the child who must have the epiphany.

A dad



### My Daughter's Needs Never Met

It is now approaching 16 years since my daughter first accused me. The church that facilitated and encouraged her allegations because of their negligent and criminal counseling remains contented in its original judgment. My daughter's true needs were never addressed even though they were known to the counselor.

I find encouragement from the FMSF Newsletter records of retractions and reconciliations. Perhaps there is still hope for me.

A dad



### An Isolated Instance?

I have had two calls in the last few weeks. Both pertained to adult children who had returned after years of accusations and all seemed to be going well when they suddenly began the old accusations. I don't know if this is a new thing happening or just isolated instances but wanted you to be aware of them.

An FMSF contact



"Do not trust your memory; it is a net full of holes; the most beautiful prizes slip through it."

Georges Duhamel

## Remembering Our Childhood: How Memory Betrays Us

Karl Sabbagh  
Oxford University Press (2009)

Shows how fragile and unreliable our memories are, especially those of childhood.

## “Recovered Memories: Are They Reliable?”

**FREE.**

Call or write the FMS  
Foundation for pamphlets.  
Be sure to include your  
address and the number of  
pamphlets you need.

### Hungry for Monsters

A limited supply of the VHS version of the remarkable documentary *Hungry for Monsters* is available through the FMSF at the reduced price of \$15.00 (includes postage). (Foreign price is \$20.00)

*Hungry for Monsters* is the account of one family's ordeal with memory-focused psychotherapy, the cultivation of memories, and accusations of sexual abuse. It is an excellent resource for showing others how someone can come to believe in abuse that never happened and the tragic consequences that inevitably follow.

DVD version is available at full price on Amazon.

For full description of the video see: <http://www.zalafilms.com/films/hfmorder2.pdf>

**To order VHS send check for \$15.**

### Web Sites of Interest

[www.seweb.uci.edu/faculty/loftus/](http://www.seweb.uci.edu/faculty/loftus/)

Elizabeth Loftus

<http://www.theisticsatanism.com/asp/>

Against Satanic Panics

[comp.uark.edu/~lampinen/read.html](http://comp.uark.edu/~lampinen/read.html)

The Lampinen Lab False Memory Reading Group,  
University of Arkansas

[www.exploratorium.edu/memory/](http://www.exploratorium.edu/memory/)

The Exploratorium Memory Exhibit

[www.tmdArchives.org](http://www.tmdArchives.org)

The Memory Debate Archives

<http://www.psyfmfrance.fr>

French False Memory Group

[www.psychoheresy-](http://www.psychoheresy-aware.org/ministry.html)

[aware.org/ministry.html](http://www.psychoheresy-aware.org/ministry.html)

The Bobgans question Christian counseling

[www.IllinoisFMS.org](http://www.IllinoisFMS.org)

Illinois-Wisconsin FMS Society

[www.ltech.net/OHIOarmhp](http://www.ltech.net/OHIOarmhp)

Ohio Group

[www.afma.asn.au](http://www.afma.asn.au)

Australian False Memory Association

[www.bfms.org.uk](http://www.bfms.org.uk)

British False Memory Society

[www.religioustolerance.org/sra.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/sra.htm)

Information about Satanic Ritual Abuse

[www.angryparents.net](http://www.angryparents.net)

Parents Against Cruel Therapy

[www.geocities.com/newcosanz](http://www.geocities.com/newcosanz)

New Zealand FMS Group

[www.peterellis.org.nz](http://www.peterellis.org.nz)

Site run by Brian Robinson contains information  
about Christchurch Creche and other cases.

[www.werkgroepwfh.nl](http://www.werkgroepwfh.nl)

Netherlands FMS Group

[www.falseallegation.org](http://www.falseallegation.org)

National Child Abuse

Defense & Resource Center

[www.nasw.org/users/markp](http://www.nasw.org/users/markp)

Excerpts from *Victims of Memory*

[www.rickross.com/groups/fsm.html](http://www.rickross.com/groups/fsm.html)

Ross Institute

[www.enigma.se/info/FFI.htm](http://www.enigma.se/info/FFI.htm)

FMS in Scandinavia - Janet Hagbom

[www.nctj.org/](http://www.nctj.org/)

National Center for Reason & Justice

[www.traumaversterking.nl](http://www.traumaversterking.nl)

English language web site of Dutch retractor.

[www.quackwatch.org](http://www.quackwatch.org)

This site is run by Stephen Barrett, M.D.

[www.stopbadtherapy.com](http://www.stopbadtherapy.com)

Contains information about filing complaints.

[www.FMSFonline.org](http://www.FMSFonline.org)

Web site of FMS Foundation.

### Legal Web Sites of Interest

- [www.caseassist.com](http://www.caseassist.com)
- [www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com)
- [www.legalengine.com](http://www.legalengine.com)
- [www.accused.com](http://www.accused.com)
- [www.abuse-excuse.com](http://www.abuse-excuse.com)

### The Rutherford Family Speaks to FMS Families

The DVD made by the Rutherford family is *the* most popular DVD of FMSF families. It covers the complete story from accusation, to retraction and reconciliation. Family members describe the things they did to cope and to help reunite. Of particular interest are Beth Rutherford's comments about what her family did that helped her to retract and return.

**Available in DVD format only:**

**To order send request to**

FMSF -DVD, 1955 Locust St.

Philadelphia, PA 19103

\$10.00 per DVD; Canada add \$4.00;

other countries add \$10.00

Make checks payable to FMS

Foundation

## Don't Miss It!

*Try to Remember:  
Psychiatry's Clash  
Over Meaning, Memory,  
and Mind*

Paul McHugh, M.D., Washington,  
DC: Dana Press

### Recommended Books

**Remembering Trauma**

Richard McNally

**Science and Pseudoscience in Clinical  
Psychology**

S. O. Lilienfeld, S.J. Lynn, J.M. Lohr (eds.)

**Psychology Astray:**

**Fallacies in Studies of "Repressed  
Memory" and Childhood Trauma**

by Harrison G. Pope, Jr., M.D.



## CONTACTS & MEETINGS - UNITED STATES

### ALABAMA

See Georgia

### ALASKA

Kathleen 907-333-5248

### ARIZONA

Phoenix

Pat 480-396-9420

### ARKANSAS

Little Rock

Al & Lela 870-363-4368

### CALIFORNIA

Sacramento

Jocelyn 530-570-1862

San Francisco & North Bay

Charles 415-435-9618

San Francisco & South Bay

Eric 408-738-0469

East Bay Area

Judy 925-952-4853

Central Coast

Carole 805-967-8058

Palm Desert

Eileen and Jerry 909-659-9636

Central Orange County

Chris & Alan 949-733-2925

Covina Area

Floyd & Libby 626-357-2750

San Diego Area

Dee 760-439-4630

### COLORADO

Colorado Springs

Doris 719-488-9738

### CONNECTICUT

S. New England

Paul 203-458-9173

### FLORIDA

Dade/Broward

Madeline 954-966-4FMS

Central Florida - Please call for mtg. time

John & Nancy 352-750-5446

Sarasota

Francis & Sally 941-342-8310

Tampa Bay Area

Bob & Janet 727-856-7091

### GEORGIA

Atlanta

Wallie & Jill 770-971-8917

### ILLINOIS

Chicago & Suburbs - 1st Sun. (MO)

Eileen 847-985-7693 or

Liz & Roger 847-827-1056

Peoria

Bryant & Lynn 309-674-2767

### INDIANA

Indiana Assn. for Responsible Mental  
Health Practices

Pat 317-865-8913

Helen 574-753-2779

### KANSAS

Wichita - Meeting as called

Pat 785-762-2825

### KENTUCKY

Louisville- Last Sun. (MO) @ 2pm

Bob 502-367-1838

### LOUISIANA

Sarah 337-235-7656

### MAINE

Rumford

Carolyn 207-364-8891

Portland - 4th Sun. (MO)

Bobby 207-878-9812

### MARYLAND

Carol 410-465-6555

### MASSACHUSETTS/NEW ENGLAND

Andover - 2nd Sun. (MO) @ 1pm

Frank 978-263-9795

### MICHIGAN

Greater Detroit Area

Nancy 248-642-8077

Ann Arbor

Martha 734-439-4055

### MINNESOTA

Terry & Collette 507-642-3630

Dan & Joan 651-631-2247

### MISSOURI

Kansas City - Meeting as called

Pat 785-738-4840

Springfield - Quarterly (4th Sat. of Apr.,

Jul., Oct., Jan.) @12:30pm

Tom 417-753-4878

Roxie 417-781-2058

### MONTANA

Lee & Avone 406-443-3189

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Jean 603-772-2269

Mark 802-872-0847

### NEW JERSEY

Sally 609-927-4147 (Southern)

Nancy 973-729-1433 (Northern)

### NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque - 2nd Sat. (BI-MO) @1 pm

Southwest Room -Presbyterian Hospital

Maggie 505-662-7521(after 6:30pm) or

Sy 505-758-0726

### NEW YORK

Westchester, Rockland, etc.

Barbara 914-922-1737

Upstate/Albany Area

Elaine 518-399-5749

### NORTH CAROLINA

Susan 704-538-7202

### OHIO

Cleveland

Bob & Carole 440-356-4544

### OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma City

Dee 405-942-0531

### OREGON

Portland area

Kathy 503-655-1587

### PENNSYLVANIA

Harrisburg

Paul & Betty 717-691-7660

Pittsburgh

Rick & Renee 412-563-5509

Montrose

John 570-278-2040

Wayne (includes S. NJ)

Jim & Jo 610-783-0396

### TENNESSEE

Nashville

Kate 615-665-1160

### TEXAS

Houston

Jo or Beverly 713-464-8970

El Paso

Mary Lou 915-595-2966

### UTAH

Keith 801-467-0669

### WASHINGTON

See Oregon

### WISCONSIN

Katie & Leo 414-476-0285 or

Susanne & John 608-427-3686

### WYOMING

Alan & Lorinda 307-322-4170

## CONTACTS & MEETINGS - INTERNATIONAL

### BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

Vancouver & Mainland

Lloyd 250-741-8941

Victoria & Vancouver Island

John 250-721-3219

### MANITOBA CANADA

Roma 204-275-5723

### ONTARIO, CANADA

London

Adriaan 519-471-6338

Ottawa

Eileen 613-836-3294

Burlington

Ken & Marina 905-637-6030

Waubashene

Paula 705-543-0318

### QUEBEC

Claudine: cscampeau@videotron.ca

514-620-6397 French and English

### AUSTRALIA

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### FRANCE

afsi.fauxsouvenirs@wabadii.fr

### ISRAEL

FMS ASSOCIATION fax-972-2-625-9282

### NEW ZEALAND

Colleen 09-416-7443

### SWEDEN

Ake Moller FAX 48-431-217-90

### UNITED KINGDOM

The British False Memory Society

Madeline 44-1225 868-682

Deadline for the SUMMER 2009 issue is  
May 10. Meeting notices **MUST** be in  
writing and should be sent no later than  
**two months before meeting.**

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pjf@cis.upenn.edu

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